

THE
GARDNER at the GALLOWS:
FOR
BUGGERIE
Laid to his Charge.

Being a True Narrative of a Strange and Admirable Passage of Gods Providence in the Reprieve of Thomas Rivers Gardner, living at St. Giles in Southampton Buildings; who being Indicted for Buggering his Apprentice Henry Wells, a Lad about 15 years of age, was condemned on Friday the 13. of this instant December, at the Old-Bayly Sessions, and drawn to Tyburn the Wednesday following, about 10 a clock; where being tied up, the Lad and his Mother being present, they declare the wrong they had done him; who thereupon was Reprieved.

Also the passages between the Master and Servant when brought back.

Written by one who was an Eye and Ear Witness.



Gardener.



Innocency Reprieved,

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The Gardener at the Gallows, for
Buggery laid to his charge.

I Cannot stand to make any preface to the ensuing Narrative, in regard I am confined in my time, and to one sheet of paper; I shall therefore apply my self to inform the Reader of what I had from his own mouth, who is the Subject of this ensuing Discourse. *Thomas Rivers* Gardener, aged about 27 years, dwelling in *South-hampton* buildings in *Vine-street* took an Apprentice or Servant, whose name is *Henry Wells*, a Lad about 15 Years old; the said *Rivers* having married a Wife above Two years before, and brought her out of *Ireland*; which is a woman of an honest and simple behaviour. This boy ran away from his Master about 3 Months ago, and being a Lad of a prompt wit and confidence, spent much of his time about Birds; which *Mr. Rivers* wife also delighted in, and occasioned her, when he was with them, to allow him something for the keeping of them: and would range up and down the fields to take his pleasure. But the said *Rivers* about two months after this Lad ran a-

way, understanding he was with his Mother, obtained two Warrants to apprehend him, and bring him home again; the last whereof he served upon him with his own hands, about 3 weeks or a month ago, and had the Boy before a Justice; where being come, he swore, *That the occasion of his running away from his said Master, was, because he had several times Bugger'd him.* Upon which Oath the said Rivers was committed to the Gate-house, where he remained about 16 days, and when the last Sessions was in the Old Bayly, December 11. 1667. he was brought from thence to Newgate, and from thence to his Trial at the Old Bayly. There came this Lad and swore against him, *That his said Master Thomas Rivers, did one time when his Mistress was forth, invite him the said Henry Wells into bed to him, and asked if he were cold, which he said he was, and then and there he Bugger'd him, and Enter'd his body; and that after that he took him in the Cellar, and tied him up by the two wrists, and there abused him; and also that upon a Sunday after, the said Master took him out into the fields, and did the like unto him a'ter he had bound him.*

There came in behalf of Mr. Rivers the Gardener, two or three Witnesses, viz. the Constable, the Beadle, and a Neighbour; the two former did assert, *That they were present when the Master apprehended the Boy, and had him before the Justice, and that then the Boy swore, He had Bugger'd him eight times.* The other spake to his conversation and living, which, he said, was harmless and innocent; the said Rivers being of a very softly disposition and nature. But all this took not away the Boy's Evidence, which he declared with so much confidence, and answering all Objections, that the said Thomas Rivers

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was brought in Guilty on *Friday* the 13. day of this instant *December*, 1667. and accordingly was condemned to be hanged at *Tyburn*, (the common place of Execution) for the said Fact. Between the Sentence and the Execution, the Minister of the place, *Mr. welden*, was often with him, and after many serious Exhortations, did persuade him to confess his Fact, and thereby give Glory to God, whose Justice had brought him to that signal Punishment. But *Mr. Rivers* still persisted on his Innocency, and the burden of all still was, *That he was as Innocent from the Fact as the Child unborn.* And notwithstanding his remorse and Repentance, which was kindly and good, for all his former sins; but observing that this had no Impression at all upon him: put *Mr. welden*, the Minister, (whose prudent Industry in this thing is much to be commended) upon a more strict Examination of the Boy; which accordingly he did, having sent for him on *Sunday*, and at other times, found the Boy still in the same Story: Some of the Keepers also taking the Lad to task, yet could not find him vary one word from what he had sworn at the Court.

And now the Fatal day of *Mr. Rivers* Execution is come, which was on *wednesday* the 18. day of this instant *December*, 1667. He being prepared to die, was put into the Cart that Morning, about 10 of the clock, and so guarded away to *Tyburn*. But still God was pleased to put it upon the heart of *Mr. welden*, the Minister of *Newgate*, to send one of the Keepers again for this Boy, who was brought accordingly, and carried to the *White-Hart Tavern* in *Smithfield*, and there again examined and exhorted in the Fear of God, That if he had sworn falsely against his Master, that he would then and

there declare it. But still the Boy persisted in his report; and whereas it was observed before by the Minister and the Keeper, that the Boys Mother, whose name is *Wells*, and also others of his Kindred did use to whisper to him, either before or after they had examined him: Mr. *welden* singles him out from them, and takes him into a Coach with himself and Keeper, and so he accompanied his Master to the Gallows; yet all this while he did not discover the least remorse of heart. Being all come to the place of Execution, Mr. *Rivers* is Tyed up to the Gallows, and here having made his last Speech and Prayer, he now waited for the Fatal Turn that should turn him into Eternity; and now was the last time that this Lad had to confess his Error, which accordingly he did, being in the same Cart where the Prisoner was to be Turned Over. The Minister told him, that now was the last time he had to Declare his Conscience, and the truth of the Fact: The Lad seeing his Master now upon the brink of Death, and his Cap ready to be pulled down over his Eyes; cryed out, that he had wronged his Master, and sworn falsely against him; the Minister hearing that, bid him direct his Speech to the People, which accordingly he did, and declared to them that were Spectators that he was Forsworn, which the Boys Mother also did at the place of Execution; upon which, the Ordinary (having Order before, if the Boy did Deny it) taking notice, presently dispatcht one of the Sheriffs Officers, with one of the Keepers to the *Kings Majesty*, who immediately Riding to *White-hall*, found his Majesty at Dinner; they Declared to his Majesty the whole Business, whereupon his Majesty was graciously pleased to Order

Order them forthwith to return back with all hast, and Reprieve the Prisoner, and not stay for methodizing it, least it should be too late. And now the Messenger of Life being come to the Place, which is to the Prisoner as a Resurrection from the Dead, where he was untied from the Gallows, and brought back again on Horse-back behind one of the Officers, with the Halter about his Neck, the Officer having the end of it in his Halbeard-hand, they alighted at the Tavern, with the Guard, where came up to him again the Boy and his Friend, who again asked him Forgiveness, to whom he meekly said the Lord forgive you, for I do, and being desired to drink a Glass of Wine, he took only one Glas, and then reflected again upon some passages of his own Life, repeating what he thought had been amiss in himself; he could not call to mind any pleasure he had been else addicted unto, unless it were Ringing; which being still with the Rope about his Neck, and the Noose under his Ear, as it was put by the Executioner, some of the Company thought that might put him more than ordinary in mind of it.

From thence he was conveyed unto *Newgate*, where he now remains; and several of his Friends and Neighbours being with him the next morning, and discoursing with him about divers things, as concerning the Fact: unto which he answered, he thanked God he was never so much as tempted to it: Also concerning his Death, and what thoughts he had when he thought he should be Turned off; He answered, that he had thoughts of Dying; but withal, a very great impress upon his mind, that his Innocency, as to that thing, would be cleared up before, or at his Death, which he
saith

saith he was perswaded too from a Dream that hapned
to him the Night before he was carried to be Executed,
which was this;

He thought he beheld himself in a Field of wheat, and
whilst he was beholding the goodliness of the Corn, there
were abundance of Turtle-doves come flying about him,
and others stood before him flaring him in the Face, which
he looks upon as Emblems of Innocency, and the wheat to be
near the Harvest, but yet not wholly ripe for the Sickle.

Strange if True



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